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Continuity in educational supervision: a case study

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the continuity of supervision and how it is done. It is thought that the study is important because it brings out the ideas of supervisors about the continuity of supervision. This study is a qualitative research and a semi structured interview is used. Participants are composed of education supervisors in İzmir. Purposive sampling method is used in the study. At the end, the importance of continuity in educational supervision is emphasized.

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1. Introduction

Today, education system that prepares individuals for change and keep face with the change with its whole elements is needed. Rapid changes in technology and production of knowledge forces organizations and employers to learn and because of that rearrangement of adopted objectives, content, appliances and tools used in education is required. To follow this change, sustainable renewal of teachers who are the basic elements of education increases id needed (Memduhoğlu & Zengin, 2012). So, teachers' need to develop and renew themselves not only increases the importance of their own efforts, but also increases the importance of efforts and supports of the people who is responsible for growing up teachers (Ergüneş & Ovalı, 2011). A way of providing that is to apply an effective supervision process by giving priority to guidance and professional

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development.

Inspection involves visits, observation of organizational services, programs and plans, evaluation of the quality made by the inspectors individually or in teams (Wilcox, 2000). From this point of view supervision can be assumed as a control mechanism. However, supervision as it has a developmental function is seen today as an essential tool emphasizing the necessity of supervision (Aydın, 2005; Demirtaş, 2010).

According to Başar (2000), principles of supervision are intentionality, planning, continuity, objectivity, integrity, contingency, openness, and democracy. Because of integrity and effectivity in the implementation of principles of supervision, there should be in an interaction among these principles. For example, contingency needs integrity, openness interacts with democracy, and continuity interacts with planning. Continuity is used for expression of continuing actions and cases never cut (Bıçak, 2004). It is seen both in problem and in solutions of that problem (Bıçak, 2004; Özen & Sağlam, 2010).

When there is no continuity in supervision, it is too late for changes and corrections. Also, continuing supervision provides the interaction of past and future (Başar,2000). In contemporary educational supervision there is an order and continuity. How teaching methods should be regulated to the student's development levels, methods of supervision also should be regulated in accordance with the teachers' professional development levels (Aydın, 2000). When the literature is examined, it is seen that researches investigating the continuity in supervision that it is limited. Hence, it is important to apply supervision services and to ensure continuity of them.

1.1.Aim of the study

Purpose of the study is to examine the continuity of supervision and how it is done. It is thought that the study is important because it brings out the ideas of supervisors about the continuity of supervision.

2. Method

This study is a qualitative research and a semi structured interview is used. Participants are composed of education supervisors in İzmir. Purposive sampling method is used in the study. Draft of the semi structured interview form gets the final form through with the expert opinions. In the study, internal validity is obtained by examining of experts, confirmation of participants and making the interviews in a long time interval. External validity is obtained by detailed description. Also, by consistency examining, internal reliability is obtained and by confirmation examination made by three experts, external reliability is obtained. For the data analysis, descriptive and content analysis methods are used.

2. Findings

Opinions of the participants are gathered without their names, but coded because of the privacy reasons. So, supervisors' names are coded as 'D' and every participant gets code names as 'D1, D2, D3... D10'.

3.1. Opinions about continuity of supervision

Through that sub problem the first question in the interview is "How do you describe the term continuity which is one of the principles of supervision?" As an answer to that question, education supervisors mentioned on teacher development, graduating student, frequency of inspection time/periodic inspection, inspection of the principal, clinical supervision, integration of school and inspection, continuous exchange of ideas, active communication, continuity of observation, subsequence precedence relation, following the quality, control of problems and bureaucratic necessity.

One (D2) of the supervisors talked about continuity in supervision as: "Continuity of supervision is to carry out a guidance process and to evaluate in certain time intervals. Primary schools are inspected certainly in every two years. There is continuity. Every institution is inspected in every two years. Especially it is on the primary school level. But, there is not a certainty on the inspection of new primary, secondary and high schools. There will be change in the regulation, by the Ministry. The law makes us to get the responsibility of supervision of those schools. Government institutions are inspected in every two years and private institutions are inspected in each year." D1, D5 and D6 coded participants also said similar things and emphasized those inspections are made periodically. The one (D3) who specified continuity in education supervision can be provided if the school managers are given more authority on supervision tells: "Continuity of education supervision is to provide supervision by making school principals more sufficient on the education activities in school and to continue to remote supervision by the supervisors." D8 also says similar things with D3.

3.2. The perceptions on how to provide sustainability in inspection

The question in the interview form according to the sub dimension is "How is the sustainability provided in inspection?." As response to this question, provincial education inspectors mentioned the reports, usage of different communication methods, the same inspectors' inspection, legal regulations, total assessment, raising awareness, preparing effective inspection plans.

The provincial education inspector D8, expressed his views about different communication methods and raising awareness as "The aim of inspection is to make teachers their self inspection., that's why inspectors have been trying to raise awareness, only by raising awareness inspections can be continued. ...I have been talking to teachers, trying to persuade the teacher to correct the false situations and also trying them to believe. If the teachers believe in me, he makes the change himself. If the teachers believe in the inspector that he guides the teacher then he can share his troubles with the inspector. If the teachers believe that the inspector will only criticize him there becomes a negative communication". D2 also mentioned his ideas as follows "After the inspection there becomes a bond between the teacher and the inspector. All the communication ways such as

internet, phones are open to the teachers. We also give our mobile phone numbers to the teachers. They can call us whenever they want, it does not matter if it is day or night. Especially this year, due to the primary class first level, lots of people called me. School administrators, teachers all can call us.” D1, D4, D5 and D6 expressed similar views as D8 and D2.

One of the provincial education administrators’ D3 expressed his view as, “ According to the legislation, schools are inspected biennially. This period causes fast inspection and decrease in quality. When you visit a school, you can see that at least 40 teachers work there, and you should do the inspections in two days , we write our reports, and deliver it to the related chair.” And like D3, D2, D5, D6, D7 and D8 mentioned that reports are one of the most important factors for the sustainability of the inspection.

3.3. The perceptions on the significance of inspection’s sustainability

The question in the interview form according to this sub dimension is “ Why sustainability is important in inspection?”. As a result of the analysis five themes emerged out which are, the significance according to organization, student, society, teacher, inspector. The most important theme is the importance of inspection for the teachers’ improvements (D2, D3, D5, D6, D7 and D8) secondly for the success of the students (D2, D3, D4 and D6).

One of the provincial school inspectors expressed his view about the improvement of teachers as follows, “The aim of the feedback after the observation of the teacher is for guiding them to improve themselves. For the guidance we tell both the positive and negative sides of them. For example during the lesson, if the teacher always tells the lesson himself we warn them and tell them that it is not appropriate to the programme. I suggest some resources related to the trouble.”. D3’s idea on the success of the students is as “ I think that inspection remains unclaimed as it is done biennially. If head teachers and inspectors play more roles in the inspection system, schools will not remain unclaimed, and the sustainability of the inspection will remain. If the inspection is sustained, it will be effective in students’ success.”

Four provincial education inspectors (D3, D6, D7, D8) expressed similar views about the continuity of inspections importance according to the inspectors . D3 said “ The continuity of inspection can be effective to the inspector for his own motivation. Inspector’s motivation has been decreasing. You visit one or two schools in a year. Our mood also changes in time. When you go to a school, you should be prepared. For preparation you should have taken data about schools before. However none of them happens.”

3.4. The perceptions on the factors that affect the sustainability of inspection negatively

The question in the interview form according to this sub dimension is “What are the factors that effect the continuity of inspection negatively?”. The most emphasized themes are the limited period of inspection, (D2, D3, D4 and D5), the improvement of working conditions of inspectors (D1, D2, D5 and D6),the change of growing

up inspectors (D4, D6 and D7), the variety of inspection field (D3, D4 and D6), the change of some factors that are related to Ministry (D5, D6 and D7), the improvement of competencies of inspectors (D3, D4 and D8), the improvement of administrators competencies (D3, D8), multiple inspection systems (D3, D8).

D5 mentioned his thought as follows; “ We have been talking on our troubles about the improvement of our working conditions, we always face with the similar problems, we also are not informed about the change in education system for example about 4+4+4 although we do the inspections.” D3 expressed his thought as follows “ The inspections which is done for guidance is limited. Our working conditions is expanded through the Ministry of Education decree so we can not catch up with those many works. We also have investigation responsibilities besides guidance and supervision. The variety of inspections prevents us from the time for guidance.” D4 said, “I visited a school and attended 80 hour lesson, I looked at the performance of the teacher, namely I observed his job performance. I examined his job planning and current situation for his success. At the end of the lesson, there becomes an identification for the current observed situation. What did the teacher do? He did this, he does not know this, at the end he gained improvement, this is not enough, ..but the time is not enough.”

About the negative effects D5 told the following statements, “ There has been a problem on the sustainability of the inspection. There is an educational planning problem. These plans are not done by educators or theorists or field experts. A lawyer became minister of education, engineer became minister of education, as they were not educators they assumed that they made an invention. That s the painful side.”

D8 said “ The inspection should be revised. Inspection has been done in three different levels, internal audit, ministry and primary school inspectors should be combined under one level. There becomes role challenge in inspection system.”

3. 3.5. The perceptions on the suggestions of providing the sustainability of inspection

The question in the interview form according to this sub dimension is “ What are your suggestions to provide the sustainability of inspection?” The mostly emphasized themes are alternately inspection in specific schools (D1, D2, D3 and D5), the increase of knowledge technology (D3, D4, D6 and D7), the increase of decentralization (D5, D6, D7 and D8), the structural change of inspection system (D2, D4 and D8).

D5 expressed his idea as follows; “The inspectors’ working in specific fields or working in limited number of schools alternately gives him the opportunity to know the school more. The assessment of the inspection becomes more objective.” D3 said, “The increase in the usage of knowledge technology should be better, I formed up a group in internet during my visit to third class. I felt myself as if I visit the school more often, I was taking notes also, but the information had reached us before we visited the schools, we did more logical guidance.”

4. Discussion

Supervisors thought the relationship with the concept of continuity which is one of the principles of supervision and teacher development, graduating of students, periodic supervision, supervision by school principal, clinical supervision, co-operation with school and supervisor, continuous exchange of ideas, active communication, continuity of observation, the relationship of priority and post, follow up of quality, control of problems and bureaucratic necessity. Supervisor provided continuity of supervision with methods of reporting, using of different communication techniques, the control by the same supervisor, compliance with laws and regulations, making collective assessment, raising awareness, preparation of effective supervision plan. Supervisors said that continuity of supervision was important in terms of corporate, student, community, teachers and supervisors. Supervisors mentioned factors that adversely affect the continuity of the supervision such as limited supervision period, improving the working conditions of supervisors, change of supervisor training, diversity of supervision field, change of management structure of the Ministry, development of supervisors' competences, development of administrators' competences and structure of multi-control system. Supervisors reported that in order to ensure the continuity of supervision, supervisors should work in particular schools, use the information technologies, enhance decentralization and change the structure of supervision system.

According to the findings, supervisors tried to explain the continuity of supervision in terms of basic elements of the education system, supervisors whose the using methods indicated that they tried to realization of continuity partially however supervisors presented the solution suggestions due to institutional problems and individual problems of supervisors in education system. The suggestions of this research in line with these results are as follows:

1. The realization problems related with continuity of supervisors should be discussed by school administrators, supervisors, teachers and academics.
2. Supervisors are responsible for overseeing the institution and the number of teachers is very high. When it is added to investigations and inquiries, workloads of supervisors further increased. However the numbers of theirs are not sufficient. Therefore, the number of supervisors can be increased in schools.
3. Because period allocated for supervision is insufficiency for even identification and assessment the various aspects of teachers, supervisors can be started to in only a few number of schools.

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